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L I F E

OF

J. P. BRISSOT, *K*

DEPUTY FROM EURE AND LOIRE,

TO THE

NATIONAL CONVENTION.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

L O N D O N

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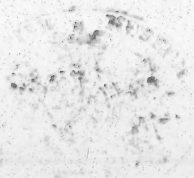
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T H E
L I F E, &c.

FOR some time past, I have been as-
persed, with the most unaccountable
virulence, in several of the public papers.
The former part of my life has been at-
tacked; my probity has been insulted. It

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is my duty to defend it: these libellists have been but too much emboldened by my silence. In despite of my aversion from occupying the public with myself, my works, my enterprises, and my misfortunes, I am, at length, compelled to unfold the history of the whole. To me, who am pressed by so many labours, assailed, at once, by such a multitude of enemies, and engaged on questions of the utmost importance, this task becomes a painful sacrifice. Yet, it is a necessary sacrifice; I owe it to my relations, to my friends, and to my children, who ought to have reason one day to glory in their father: I owe it to the cause of liberty, which I have espoused, and which I hope not to disgrace: finally, I owe it to those who grant me their esteem.

I shall,

I shall, therefore, prove to them that I have *never* rendered myself unworthy either of myself or of the public respect.

The man who has not constantly proved deserving of the regard of the public, but, who has taken care to arrange appearances upon his side, and to remain covered by an impenetrable veil, may confine himself within the point of defying the adversaries who assault him to substantiate their accusations ; and he may triumph over their inability.

I act better : I throw open to my enemies the book of my life ; and I urge them to read with me all the pages which it contains.

Issuing spotless and irreproachable from this investigation, I shall no longer be obliged to descend to a second trial; and, should any new calumniator present himself, I shall refer him to the details of this memorial.

All of these are essential to my cause; for, as a fabulous narrative of my life has been printed, it behoves me to publish the real history of it; and, should I establish that, during the whole course of this life, my only object was the public welfare, to which I have perpetually sacrificed both my labours and my interest; that for this, I have renounced those means which lead rapidly to fortune; if, I say, all my life proves this fact, will it not follow, as sufficiently probable, that I am not a dishonest man?

I will

I will say more: there is not one of these details which it does not import my readers to know. A moral and political writer is the compatriot, the friend, the brother, the councillor of those who read him. There is formed between them a pleasing society, a communion of ideas. Now, we love thoroughly to know those whom we frequent: we take a delight in seeing them without a blemish. The reader judges the moral writer with the severity of Cæsar in the case of his wife. It is, therefore, on this occasion, that I particularly address myself to the readers of my different works: it is for them that I print this memorial, as the result, or, rather, as the practical verification of the doctrine which I have published. They have read my writings; they are on the point of knowing their author; they are
about

about to hear his confession. I call Heaven to witness that I make it here with the same sincerity as if I had one foot in the grave. I proceed to examine,

First, what I have done until this present hour :

Secondly, of what I am accused.

First. *What I have done until this present hour.*

I was born in 1754. The despicable Journalist *, who, during the course of

* If the reading of a philosopher were not a punishment to a perverse mind, I should refer this libellist to the following passage, from the forty-fourth epistle of Seneca : *Patricius Socrates non fuit, Cleanthes aquam traxit, et rigando hortulo locavit manus. Platonem non accepit nobilem philosophia, sed fecit.*

five years, has disgusted his readers by absurdly ringing the changes upon the *stoves* of my father, would, doubtless, have sported, also, with the anvil of Demosthenes, the stirrup of Amyot, and of the Poet Rousseau, the tan-pits of Maffillon, and the cutlery of Diderot. He little imagined that, in 1789, an article of the declaration of rights would cover with shame the partizans of the prejudice of birth, by declaring (what philosophy had never ceased to pronounce) that men were born equal; and that there was no birth either illustrious or obscure.

One has not the choice of a father. If my birth had been at my own option, could I have fixed upon the station of the author of my being, I should not have placed it in a palace, but under the simple and rustic
roof

roof of an American husbandman. *That* is the occupation which would have made me proud: it would have enabled my father to have unfolded his character and all those qualities which rendered him esteemed by his fellow-citizens, but, which were buried under his business, as a *Traiteur**. Being the parent of a numerous family, he employed all the means resulting from his easy circumstances to give them a good education. I, then, pursued my studies, the success attending the public course of which seemed to invite me, at an early period, to the bar, the only career in France at that time apparently open to talents and to liberty. Previously to my being called to it, a progress through that disgusting noviciate, which is the fore-

* The Keeper of an Eating House.

runner of the initiation of candidates into the order of orators, became necessary. The office of an Attorney was my *gymnasium*; I laboured in it for the space of five years, as well in the country as in Paris. As I advanced in the study of *chicane*, my disgust against the profession increased: and this aversion was accompanied by that indignation which the feeling and unpractised minds of young persons naturally experience at the discovery of unprincipled impostures. To relieve my weariness and disgust, I applied myself to Literature and to the Sciences. The study of the languages was, above all others, my favourite pursuit. Chance threw in my way two Englishmen, on a visit to my own country; I learned their language; and this circumstance decided my fate.

It was at the commencement of my passion for that language that I made the metamorphosis of a diphthong in my name, which has been imputed to me as so great a crime; and, since I must render an account of every particular point, lest even the slightest hold against me should be afforded to malignity, I will declare the cause of the change in question. Born the thirteenth child of my family and the second of my brothers in it, I bore, for the purpose of being distinguished from them, according to the custom of *Beauce*, the name of a village in which my father possessed some landed property. This village was called *Ouarville*, and *Ouarville* became the name by which I was known in my own country. A fancy struck me that I would cast an English air over my name, and, therefore, I substituted, in the place of the

French

French diphthong *ou*, the W of the English, which has the same sound. Since this nominal alteration, having put it as a signature to my published works and to different deeds, I judged it right to preserve it. If this be a crime, I participate in the guilt of the French *literati* who, in the 16th and 17th centuries, made no scruple whatsoever of *grecising* or (if we may use the expressions) *latinising* their appellations. *Arouet*, to escape from a reproachful pun upon his name, changed it into that of *Voltaire*. The *Anglomania* (if such it may be called) has occasioned me to alter mine; not, as it has been pretended, to draw in dupes, or to avoid passing for the son of my father, since I have perpetually borne, signed, and printed the name of my father after that second name which was given to me according to the custom of my country.

But, leaving, to its own fate, this ridiculous reproach, the knowledge of the English tongue and of some others, together with the perusal of well-written foreign books, gave the finishing stroke to my disgust against the bar. I quitted it to resign myself entirely up to the bent of my own taste. This step offended my parents, who designed me for the bar of Chatres. My resolution did not, however, give way. I had before my eyes, the example of a multitude of men of letters * who experienced the same fate. I put my dependance

* I shall quote but one. *Diderot* was, as I have already remarked, the son of a cutler: his father wished to bring him up to the same business; but, perceiving his aversion from it, he placed him with an Attorney. Instead of following the Courts, young *Diderot* gave himself up to literature. The Father would not defray his college-expences; but, *Diderot* himself furnished these, by giving lessons in the mathematics.

upon some friends, upon my humble talents, and upon the exceedingly narrow circle to which my wants were limited; for, I always conceived that to draw these personal wants * into a small compass was the true mode of attaining independence. To have attached myself to the study of philosophy, I would have sacrificed all considerations whatsoever; I would have become a school-master like *Winkelmann* †, or a tutor like *Rousseau*. Fortunately, I was not constrained to sacrifice my liberty. Friendship

* And, here, I call to mind, with pleasure, that able academician whose life *Fontenelle* has written, and who, with an income of only two hundred livres, knew, even at Paris, how to preserve his independence.

Winkelmann, in order that he might continue his studies, opened a school, in a village. He, likewise, found means to provide for the subsistence of an infirm and aged father. He lived upon bread and water, continually meditated, and, sometimes, walked ninety or an hundred miles, for the purpose of seeing a statue.

came

came to my assistance, and the death of my respectable father empowered me to discharge the obligations which I had contracted towards my friends. Buried in my solitude, although an inhabitant of Paris, I was enabled to gratify, during two years, my passion for the Sciences, and to prepare that immense mass of materials, out of which I was to reap advantages whensoever the time should come to employ them.

I was snatched from my studies by the English proprietor of a paper then much in circulation, and intituled *le Courier de l'Europe*. Having drawn upon himself an attack from Government, he felt and yielded to the necessity of reprinting it at *Boulogne sur-mer*. It was his wish to render it interesting to the French in the particular article of *varieties*: and these points he submitted

submitted to my superintendency and arrangement. For some moments, I hesitated. The profession of a Journalist, *subject to a Licenſer*, was repugnant to my principles; yet, it ſecured my independance, and threw before me the power of prosecuting my inveſtigation of Conſtitutions and of the Sciences. *Bayle*, I obſerved to myſelf, was a preceptor, *Poſtel* the errand-boy of a college, *Rouſſeau*, a lackey, and ſhould *I bluſh* at becoming a news-writer! Let me honour this profeſſion, and it will not diſhonour me. Thus, I ſtill reaſoned with myſelf: “ Inſtead of thoſe wretched
 “ verſes which are crouded into this paper,
 “ in the place of either fulſome and mer-
 “ cenary panegyrics, or of the moſt groſs
 “ and injurious libels, I can inſert ex-
 “ tracts from the beſt books; I can, there,
 “ propagate ſound doctrine; I can do
 “ ſervice

“service to respectable men of letters.” I, therefore, accepted this employment, and I became the more enamoured of it, as it enabled me to serve talents and virtue, and, as it were, to inoculate the French with the principles of the English Constitution. But, this consolation did not last for any length of time. The plan of the proprietor of the *Courier* was overthrown by the Administration. I quitted *Boulogne* to return to my first studies. And, here, I call to witness the respectable inhabitants of that city whom I have so often visited : Is there a single one of them who, during the whole year of my residence in it, has discovered in me, I will not say vices, but the *seeds* of any one of those vices which my adversaries have laid to my charge? Who amongst these inhabitants has not done, and would not still publicly do

do justice to my sincerity, to my disinterestedness, and to the horror with which I considered every species of dishonesty? And, boldly, upon this ground, do I invoke the testimony of all those whom I have known during the course of my studies and of my travels.

Doubtless, too eager to publish my ideas, I conceived that the proper moment had arrived, and I felt an inclination to commence with an important work. Revolting, from the very instant of my beginning to reflect, against religious and political tyranny, I solemnly protested that, thenceforward, I would consecrate my whole life to their extirpation. Religious tyranny had fallen under the redoubled strokes of *Rousseau*, of *Voltaire*, of *Diderot*, and of *d'Alembert*. It became necessary to attack

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the second ; it became necessary to break in pieces this political idol which, under the name of monarchy, practised the most violent despotism ; but to attack it openly was to expose the assailant without the possibility of serving mankind. It was by a side-blow that it was to be wounded most effectually. I observed that even the most artful tyrants, disturbed by those agitations in the human mind which announced a general revolt, turned them aside to points of politics, where abuses might be attacked and reformed without shaking their own authority. Of this number was criminal jurisprudence. Thus, we have seen that, under the auspices of the government of *Berne* the economical society of that state proposed the reform of their criminal laws. I had long contemplated this subject. With the exception of some points,

points, most successfully investigated by *Beccaria* and *Servan*, no writer had, hitherto, considered the whole of these laws under a philosophical point of view. *I* dared to undertake the task; *I* delineated a general plan; and, in the year 1780, my *Theory of Criminal Laws* appeared in two octavo volumes*. It had been, at first, designed for the society of *Berne*; but, *I* grew weary of waiting for their decision; which did not appear until 1785.

This work, favourably received by foreigners, applauded by some journalists †, and

* For this work, and for those which may be quoted in the sequel, the reader is referred to the Office of the *Patriote François*, Favart Street, Number 3.

† One of the writers by whom it has been the most fairly appreciated, and whose judgement cannot be called in question, is *M. la Cretelle*. These are his remarks in a

and torn in pieces by others, procured me the friendship of the most zealous defenders of human nature. In *their* opinion, I became pardonable for all the defects in my plan, on account of the energy conspicuous in my remarks. These defects are, certainly, numerous ; and, yet, could it have proved otherwise, in my first literary enterprize upon a new and *unpractised* matter, which a youth had proposed entirely to clear up ?

dissertation concerning those authors who have treated of the reform of the criminal laws ; and they are printed after the conclusion of his essay upon the prejudices affixed to infamy, p. 339. 1784. “ The Theory of Criminal Laws is
 “ the most considerable of his works. When the Author
 “ wrote it, he was, perhaps, too young. It does not, indeed, disclose a mind sufficiently matured, yet, it exhibits
 “ an extensive knowledge and the ambition of ascending to
 “ great principles. A fund of sagacity and energy announces a writer who need only resume his work, when
 “ his age and his talents become more ripened, to render it
 “ worthy of the subject.”

My

My Theory of Criminal Laws was soon followed by two discourses which were crown'd in 1782, by the Academy of *Châlons-sur-Marne*: the one ran upon *the reform of the criminal laws*, and the other upon *the reparation due to innocent persons unjustly accused*.

The government beheld with an evil eye the publication of these writings *, where, under the pretext of bringing into open day the abuses of the criminal laws, bold principles were insinuated the nature of governments in general. One truth draws

* My estimable and intrepid friend, *Mannet*, informs me, in *la Police dévoilée*, that *M. Miromenil*, then Keeper of the Seals, wrote to the Lieutenant de Police, that, instead of granting me the necessary permission for the introduction of this work, printed in a foreign country, it would be better to institute a suit against me; and, since, he was the means of having the academy of *Châlons* forbidden to propose the discussion of similar subjects, at their meetings.

after

after it another. Of this position, I was as thoroughly convinced as were the Ministers; and, prosecuting my long-meditated intention to attack despotism, I hastened to accumulate upon each other as many great political truths as possible. The breach was opened; and to enlarge it was the occupation of all my thoughts, in despite of the risk which I incurred.

Such was the motive which engaged me to publish, *in ten volumes, my Philosophical Library of the Criminal Laws* *.

This collection should, certainly, possess the advantage of reuniting all the dissertations and public discourses in different

* My Library of Criminal Laws was not finished until 1784. I had then several remaining materials; but other labours obliged me to throw them aside.

languages,

languages, which were before scattered and could not be thrown together without great labour and difficulty; but, the assemblage being once formed, it becomes a complete library, and equally interesting to every country. The true object, which I rather dissembled, was to diffuse those principles of liberty which guided the English and the Americans by inserting, in this collection, many pieces which aimed, exclusively, at the great political reform.

On this occasion, the celebrated *Servan* wrote to me, as follows: “ You have
 “ realised one of my earliest wishes: the
 “ reunion of all the works which have
 “ treated concerning the reform of the
 “ criminal laws. Let us cry aloud, Sir,
 “ let us cry aloud, during a whole century;
 “ perhaps, at the end of it, a king may
 “ say:

“ say : I believe that they speak to *me* ;
 “ perhaps, he will listen ; perhaps, he
 “ will introduce a reform.”

In one circumstance excepted, *M. Servan* was in the right : for, it is the People who have heard and understood ; it is the People who have heard ; it is the People who have reformed.

The study of legislation and of politics had not entirely drawn me off from that of other sciences ; such as chemistry, physics, anatomy, religion, &c. I constantly cultivated them with ardor ; yet, almost in each did I meet with obscurities, and, nearly in every quarter, truth escaped from my researches. Of the celebrated Priestley, it has been reported that, persecuted at this moment by political and religious fanaticism,
 he

he usually writes a work concerning the present object of his studies. I imitated that Englishman; and the result of my labours was a volume intituled *Concerning Truth, or Thoughts on the means of attaining Truth, in all the branches of Human Knowledge* *. These thoughts (I observed to myself) ought to be considered as the introduction to a greater work. I proposed to investigate what is *certain* in human knowledge; and, then, to strike the ba-

* The authors of the *English Review* for April, 1784, have delivered this opinion concerning the work in question. I insert the whole passage, because, it is to serve me again.

“ The enterprising author who has, at length, raised so
 “ magnificent a plan for facilitating the correspondence of
 “ the learned, and who publishes, in French, a periodical
 “ account of the state of sciences, in England, engages, in
 “ this work (*concerning Truth*) upon the most extensive and
 “ difficult inquiries. We shall not enter into a detail of
 “ them; but, it behoves us to recommend the work to our
 “ readers, as one of the most ingenious and the best written
 “ upon the subject.”

lance of the account : a balance which, in the opinion of the profound *Bonnet*, would prove of all books the most precious.

Particular circumstances prevented me from continuing this work, which, I dare affirm, will amend its readers. It brought upon me criticisms, encomiums, and abuse. The Continuator of *Freron* accused me to the Minister as a seditious writer. Let me do him justice. He thoroughly perceived my aim, which was, in fact, to lead mankind to reflect on their rights.

I had remarked that, if philosophical books were the best vehicle of political revolutions, great obstacles opposed its efficacy. The career of genius was impeded by the dread of the *Bastille*. The labours of the printers were stopped by their apprehension

tion of the *Police* : the booksellers alone set prohibitions at defiance. The difficulty, therefore, was not to procure a sale, but to find authors and printers. Now, by placing the one and the other in foreign countries, far from the stroke of tyranny, a remedy existed against this double impediment : for, the avarice of smugglers would afterwards ensure the introduction of the books into France.

Full of this idea, I imagined that the project of spreading through France great political principles might be easily effected, were some intrepid and enlightened friends of liberty to form a coalition, to fix their residence and compose their works in London, a city where the freedom of individuals is maintained in the highest degree ; and, afterwards, were they to print them

in either *Switzerland* or *Germany*, countries where the paper and the various expences of the press are cheaper, and from whence such works might, with more facility, be introduced and disseminated through France.

These memoirs might be collected together into a kind of periodical work, under the title of *An universal Correspondence on Points which are interesting to the Welfare of Man and of Society*.

I communicated my project to men who possessed the reputation of glowing with an abhorrence against despotism. They received it favourably ; they encouraged me ; they promised me every kind of support. I secured a printer and a bookseller, at that time, eminent in Germany, who undertook
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to engage in this business, to reprint, and to circulate copies in the North of Europe; and he kept his word.

The source from whence a literary inundation might have flowed in upon all France was *Switzerland*. *Geneva* and *Neufchatel* } then offered the principal assortment of *prohibited* books, by which may be understood *good* books. I determined to travel thither. This was in 1782. The aristocracy then wanted to destroy that liberty which the *representatives* defended.

The most despotic Minister, but, one who, nevertheless, the most rapidly advanced the reign of liberty, lent the arms of France to the aristocracy. The dread of this odious war, far from checking my progress, impelled it forwards at a quicker pace.

pace. I was anxious to know, even upon
 the spot, the spirit and the courage of a
 free People, and to see how Revolutions
 are made or destroyed: A witness to the
 misfortunes which befel the friends of li-
 berty, I derived some consolation from the
 ties which connected me with the most
 distinguished of these, and, particularly,
 with that person amongst them who has
 since rendered such great services to the
 finances of France, and whom I shall al-
 ways cherish as my Father. *Geneva* being
 no more than a French city, I could not
 there trust any of the points of my anti-
 despotic correspondence. *Neufchatel* of-
 fered me every advantage, and to *Neufchatel*
 I gave the preference. Sure of the re-
 printing and of the distribution of the work,
 and relying upon my cooperators at Paris,
 I hastened to London and published my
Prospectus.

Prospectus. The first numbers came out in the most rapid succession. I spared neither money nor labour to give solidity to my establishment. I unsuspectingly conceived that I should have been seconded by those who, binding themselves under the most sacred oaths, had promised me assistance and materials. How did I deceive myself! They professed themselves ready to sign articles *even with their own blood*. Born with a disposition to place a confidence in others, rejected this idea, and refused to accept of any written compact whatsoever. But, they sported with every obligation. Although deserted, I had the resolution to publish, in the year 1788, two volumes of this correspondence. They were favourably received and reprinted in Germany. But, the *English* and *Neufchatel* editions were seized in France: not a single number got abroad,

abroad, so that this work, which might have assisted in preparing the reign of freedom, continued unknown in that country. The victim of my zeal for the public good and of my credulity, I lost, in this undertaking, more than ten thousand livres. Yet, I was not discouraged.

Convinced of the insurmountable difficulty of conveying to *France*, regularly, by smuggling, a periodical work replete with bold truths respecting governments, I deemed it requisite to change my battery. The *English* constitution, which I had investigated, on the spot, appeared to me, in spite of its defects, a model for those societies who were desirous of changing their form of government. It was but little known in *France*. The work of *De Lolme*, which is no more than an ingenious panegyric
upon

upon this Constitution was only, at that time, in the hands of the learned. It was in detail; and ought, daily, to have been made known; for, to make it known was to make it beloved; was to render it desired. But, the *French* Government, apprehensive lest too much light should be thrown upon this subject, stood upon their guard. It became necessary to deceive them, and I adopted the idea of bringing forward a Journal, written actually in *London*, and containing a *Description of the Sciences and Arts in England*, the greater part of which it was intended absolutely to devote to an investigation of the *English* Constitution. The ministry, after many difficulties, granted a privilege for this Journal, conditionally that, being printed at *London*, it might be re-printed at *Paris*.

Nor was this all. I had not relinquished the design of establishing even at *London* a centre of correspondence and of re-union with the learned and with the politicians of *Europe*. Externally, it was an institution similar to that of the Lyceums and of the Museums existing at *Paris*. But, this Lyceum was not to remain confined within those strict limits which *French* tyranny had prescribed to that of *Paris*. In a word, it was my wish to create that *universal confederation of the Friends of Liberty and of Truth* which more fortunate philosophers than myself have realized at *Paris* since the French Revolution.

The description of the Sciences and of the Arts in *England* appeared in 1784. In the twelve numbers, or the two octavo volumes, which have been published, the
 Friends

Friends of Liberty must have perceived that if, on the one side, I endeavoured to inculcate more just ideas than had, hitherto, been entertained concerning this celebrated island, so, on the other, I resolutely made my advances towards that important end which has perpetually presided over all my labours: *towards the universal emancipation of Men.*

Indefatigable in my inquiries, I did not confine myself to the mere display of the political riches of *England*. I had remarked, in the works which fell into my hands, the prodigious number of those which respected the administration of the *English* possessions in the East Indies. To *me* it was an *enigma*. I resolved to unriddle it: but, I was not aware either of the immense task upon which I had engaged, or of the enor-

mous number of volumes which I was to pore over; yet, having once entered into this career, I determined to vanquish every obstacle: and I succeeded. Arrived at the summit, I beheld, with astonishment, the space which I had travelled over; a space unknown to my Countrymen; a space which it imported them to know; and, therefore, I immediately undertook to pave the way for their progress. I undertook to give them a *description of the situation of the English in the East Indies, and of the state of India in general, from the reports of the Committees of the House of Commons, from histories, from voyages, and from other works published at London.*

It appeared to me that such a description must have proved at once beneficial to Sciences and to Governments: to Sciences

as

as connected with history and with geography; and to Governments for the purpose of opening their eyes to the true interests of *India*, respecting which certain empirics in politics had drawn up false representations, for the purpose of engaging them in destructive wars.

And, is it credible? The *French* Administration so absolutely ignorant concerning the state of *India*, entertaining, with respect to it only those imperfect ideas which had been suggested to them by adventurers, by spies, or by men employed in *India*, whose reports were regulated by a spirit of self-interest*: the *French* Administration, upon whom it was incumbent to

* An exception occurs in M. *Laro of Lauriston*, one the most conversant in the affairs of *India*, and who was Governor of *Pondicherry*; and, also, in M. *d'Observille*, who has composed so agreeable and instructive a work, under the modest title of *remarks concerning some animals in the Indies*.

have paid, at a high price, for the collection which I was anxious to publish: the *French* Administration excited against me a thousand injurious attacks; nor could I obtain the permission to print what would have proved so serviceable to *France*, except upon the condition that every number should be previously submitted to the judgement of four Ministers.

But, let me confess that my secret and favourite aim still guided my pen, and I suffered it to become discernible in the sixteenth page of my first number. My observation was: "I do not, upon this occasion, pretend to furnish the different powers with those sources of knowledge which may serve to exalt the one, and to abase the other. No! never shall I harbour such an intention. I write for man; for
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the *Europeans* who frequent *India*; for the nations who either have introduced or mean to introduce establishments in that quarter; I write to disencumber commerce and politics from those iniquitous antisocial and exclusive principles by which they are, there, controlled, *to accelerate the moment when this region shall be open to all nations, when trade shall become free, when the Gentoo shall no longer look with horror upon the European, and when the European shall no longer perceive in the Gentoo a prey devoted to his rapacity, &c.*

Nothing could have proved more beneficial to the advancement of knowledge and of liberty than my *Lyceum of London*. A variety of circumstances prevented its success, and put a stop to its career when it had become the most promising. The perverse disposition

disposition of an associate, the dupe of treacherous instigations, and the incessant persecutions of the ministry, added to my confinement in the *Bastille*, which took place in 1784, totally completed its annihilation.

I am constrained again to open a wound of which the scar still bleeds, although several years have elapsed since that horrible act of injustice which had almost robbed me of what I hold most dear on earth, my wife and a beloved child. But, this is not the place for details. I will be brief.

The French Government beheld with uneasiness the circulation, in France, of libels in which they were aspersed; they ought to have despised them; but, they appeared to dread them: dearly did they
purchase

purchase the silence of their writers; and the libels increased. They imagined that their source was at *London*. I lived there; there, I wrote, there, I had a literary establishment; there, I preached the doctrines of Liberty. They suspected that *I* had borne my part in these libels. Infamous calumniators, desirous of being revenged for the contempt in which I held them, confirmed these suspicions; and my destruction was resolved upon. An opportunity presented itself for the execution of their intentions. My affairs called me to *Paris*. I was arrested and conveyed to the *Bastille*, on the 12th of July, 1784. What was my crime? Thus they questioned me as if I had been in the presence of the inquisition. Of the nature of my guilt I was ignorant. They, then, informed me that I had written libels. *I, I, write libels!* With ease did

I root up all the charges which the rage of my enemies had invented against me, all the improbable facts, all the false certificates, and the patriotic letters basely delivered by an Ambassador. My innocence appeared evident. After two months of captivity, I was enlarged; and for this justice was I indebted to an irreproachable life; a life to which even the magistrate of the *police* felt himself constrained to do homage. I, here, copy the report which he presented to the Minister, *Breteüil*, on the 5th of September, 1784, such as I find it amongst the documents which were transmitted to me.

“ The *Sieur Brissot de Warville* was conveyed to the *Bastille* on the day after the *Sieur de Pelleport*, who was arrested at *Boulogne sur-mer*, arrived at *Paris*.

In consequence of his connections with this man, guilty of writing libels, he was suspected of having been his coadjutor. The attestation of a boy in the printing-house, from whence one of these libels issued, gave strength to suspicions; but, this attestation, transmitted from *London*, is destitute of authenticity; and the *Sieur Briffot de Warville*, who has very satisfactorily answered to the interrogatories which were put to him, attributes his crimination to the animosity of enemies whom he conceives to have plotted against him, in *London*.

The *Sieur Briffot de Warville* is a man of talents, and of letters; he appears to have formed systems, and to entertain extraordinary principles: but, it is certain that, for the last seven or eight months, his connections with

the *Sieur de Pelleport* had ceased, and that he employed himself solely upon a periodical paper, which he obtained permission to circulate and sell in *France*, after having submitted it to the examination of a licencer.

“ The *Sieur Brissot de Warville* has a wife and children; he is born of honest parents; and the *Sieur Mentelle* answers for his conduct. The said *Sieur Brissot* has declared that he had an intention to quit *London*, and to take up his residence at *Boulogne*. I deem it just to grant him his liberty, tying him down, however, to the obligation of living in *France*, and to mention in what part of it he proposes to dwell, after having settled his affairs in *England*.”

M. le Noir communicated to me, in the *Bastille*, the real motive for my imprisonment,

ment. M. *Vergennes* hated *England*, and all those who cried up its Constitution. He dreaded the free-men who lived under it, and the *contagion* which they diffused. Nor was he mistaken. My residence, therefore, of twenty months, at *London*, in his opinion, constituted my crime. He exacted from me my word of honour that I would not return thither, and that I would abandon my establishment. It was upon this condition that the tyrant told me that he restored me to my liberty. I was a husband and a father. I was compelled to swear, and I gave up all.

This persecution, far from extinguishing the ardour of my wishes to inculcate the principles of freedom, served only to inflame it. The works which I published, in 1785, bear the marks of this fire. I shall quote,
from

from amongst others, my two letters to the Emperor *Joseph* the Second, *Concerning the right of emigration, and the right of the people to revolt*. These letters, very well known in *Germany*, but, to which the *French* were nearly strangers, as they had been suppressed by the *police*, were written on occasion of the ridiculous and barbarous edict against emigration, and of the atrocious punishment of *Horiab*, the chief of the *Walachian* insurgents. In this last letter, I laid it down as a fixed point, that *Horiab* was justified in revolting; that all the people who were in the situation of the *Walachians* held this sacred right from nature, and both *could*, and *ought to*, exercise it.

In the same spirit, I published, in 1786, my *Philosophical Letters on the History of England*, in two volumes. A work of this kind,

kind, very agreeably written, had appeared in *England*, but, it was one continued apology for the aristocracy of the privileged classes, and a satire upon the people. I borrowed this very frame to set within it a contrary picture, there to exhibit the aristocracy of the Nobles, and to avenge the cause of the people. The notes which accompanied this work were sentences for the use of the *French*.

Again, with the like spirit, and in the same year, I published my *Critical Examination of the Travels of the Marquis de Chateleux in North America*. This military wit had, in his work, offended the people, insulted the black slaves, and calumniated the quakers. I avenged the cause of liberty, by justifying the people; I avenged the cause of humanity, by justifying the blacks; and

I avenged

I avenged the cause of morals by justifying
the quakers

At this period, a new order of studies opened itself to my attention. I pass rapidly over my work on the finances, in which I was initiated by my deeply intelligent friend, and over some writings which I had published respecting this subject. I come to labours of greater importance. The history of the independence of *North America* had rivetted my attention. I enthusiastically admired its Constitution, and, drawing the parallel between *it* and that of *England*, I soon changed the object of my veneration, and I felt the necessity of impressing upon human societies the urgency of adopting not the shapeless and almost obliterated charter of the *Britons*, but the simple model drawn from nature, by the
Americans.

Americans. At that period, they were much exclaimed against. I undertook to defend them; I undertook to prove that if *France* wished to emerge from its adversity and to render its industry prosperous, it ought to connect itself with the free *Americans*. I then beheld in the communication subsisting between these two States an electric spark destined to light up the flame of freedom in *France*. I shall not expatiate concerning this work which * is indebted for all the deep knowledge of commerce that it contains to the abilities of *M. Claviere*. The different translations of this work in *England* and in *America* are evidences of its utility and of the consideration in which it has been holden by the publick.

* *Concerning France and the United States, &c.* I reprinted it at the end of my *Travels in America*. It composes the third volume.

At the time of my publishing this Treatise the predicament in which I stood was altered. The Chancellor of the late Duke *d'Orleans*, *M. Ducrest* wished eagerly to attach me to his administration which he was anxious to signalize by great and salutary measures. I felt a dread of this kind of engagements: but, he cleared all obstacles away, and a particular circumstance determined me to accept the post of *Secretary-general* of the Chancery. All minds were violently moved. The agitation of the Revolution was already perceivable. I conceived that its source might be established within the *Orleans-palace*, and that the Prince might immortalize himself by contributing to the establishment of freedom in *France*. I communicated my ideas to *M. Ducrest*, who, with many talents and much experience,

united

united an activity of mind; yet, unfortunately, he fell short of that determined temper, that invariable perseverance by which revolutions are accomplished. When I began to feel my ground, and the characters of the different personages, I foresaw the catastrophe. Liberty was not wanted, but the overthrow of the Ministry. I foresaw, likewise, that they would be defeated, but that freedom would perpetually gain during this contest, and, therefore, to accelerate its success, I published, against the Administration of that day, a pamphlet, to which, it being of a dangerous nature, I did not prefix my name. It was intitled: *No Bankruptcy, or Letters to a Creditor of the State concerning the impossibility of a National Bankruptcy, and the means of restoring Credit and Peace.*

The motto sufficiently explained my motives. “ *Pauca sunt* (I remarked from Seneca), *quæ dicuntur ; sed, si illa animus benè exceperet, convalescent et exsurgent ;*” or, briefly, “ a word to the wise is sufficient.”

Let it be recollected that the Archbishop of *Sens*, to avoid convoking the States-General, and to succour an agonising despotism, menaced the nation with a complete bankruptcy. This was the only measure remaining in his power ; of this the Friends of Liberty were apprised ; and they dreaded the result. They feared that this contrivance would not, in despite of its atrocity, cause an insurrection within the nation ; and they apprehended that *France* would, as in the time of *Law*, remain enslaved. It, therefore, became necessary
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to intimidate the enterprising Minister ; and such was the object of my pamphlet, which ran through several editions.

It exposed me to a *lettre de cachet*. I was apprised of my danger in time, and I passed over into *Holland*, and from thence to *England*.

At this period, *Holland* presented an interesting spectacle to any friend of liberty. She fought for its recovery. But, she became deprived of it ; and this loss was occasioned by too unlimited a confidence in the Patriots, by too supine a carelessness respecting the motions of foreign powers, by too great a neglect of endeavours to attach the indigent class of people to the Constitution, by an excessive credulity and by intestine divisions. May her example
prove

prove beneficial to ourselves ! Until the very last moment, she conceived that she would not be attacked. Had she entertained a more early persuasion to the contrary, she would never have experienced an attack ; and her Revolution *must* have been accomplished.

A change then took place in the Administration of the House of *Orleans*. I quitted it with the pleasing satisfaction of having proved, in my department, of much service to the interests of others : my own were totally forgotten.

The knowledge which I had acquired, in this place, of men who considered themselves as destined to effect a revolution, disgusted me with them. I could not comprehend the possibility of atchieving a conquest
in

in favour of freedom, amidst the general depravation of morals prevalent in this class; and, therefore, I was considered as a savage. They laughed at my ideas concerning the necessity of morals. It was on this account that I embraced a measure more decisive. I wished to live and die free; I wished to educate my children in the very bosom of morals and of independence. Yet, *these* I beheld only in the United States of *North-America*. To me, the *French* revolution appeared extremely distant. I, therefore, resolved to depart from France, for the purpose of planting my tabernacle in *America*. My project received the approbation of some worthy characters, whose sentiments and mine were congenial. But, as it would have proved imprudent suddenly to have transported numerous families to a country so far off without thoroughly knowing it, I was engaged
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to proceed thither, to examine the different places, to observe the inhabitants, and to discover where and in what manner our common establishment might be advantageously founded. Such was the principal object of my voyage to America. Previously to my undertaking it, I had enjoyed the heart-felt consciousness of having erected, in *France*, a new altar to Liberty, by founding, at *Paris*, a Society for accomplishing the abolition of the negro-trade, and for softening the condition of the slaves. At the period of my departure, this Society consisted of a number of distinguished Members; and I was commissioned to carry the first fruits of their labours to *America*.

My stay there was not so long as I was desirous of making it: the news of the *French* revolution recalled me at the beginning of
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the year 1789: it was to produce a change in my own measures and those of my friends. This idea, added to other circumstances, and united with the hope of proving serviceable to the liberty of my country, accelerated my return.

The fire had blazed forth; hope animated every heart; the most distinguished champions had engaged in the contest; I also, became anxious to break a lance; and I published my *Plan of Conduct for the Deputies of the people*.

I shall not here enumerate all my labours since the revolution; nor the numerous writings which I have published, nor the services which I have rendered to the public cause, in the different posts with which my fellow-citizens have honoured me, whether as the

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president

president of my district, or acting in the municipality, or as a member of the first committee of inquiries, or even as an elector. These several missions, succeeding to each other, and constantly attaching me to the public welfare, ought, surely, to serve as depositions of my unalterable patriotism, and of my integrity.

It was this patriotism which enabled me to defend the cause of the people of colour and the abolition of the negro-trade, with an inflexibility which appeared suspicious to corrupt men, and inexplicable to those not yet familiarised to the unshaken firmness which accompanies the principles of a true patriot. I could not without grief behold the violation of these principles consecrated by the declaration of rights, at a moment when policy itself, and all general and
all

all private interest called out for the necessity of treating them with respect. Time has judged my adversaries and *me*. Truth, now, shines, and *these Friends of the People* are totally unmasked.

Still is it my patriotifm which, notwithstanding my numerous engagements, induced me to publish my observations during my voyage to *America* *. I discovered with concern that, altering a form of Government had not established a change of morals; that although conquests might be acquired in the cause of Liberty, yet that it was not possible to preserve it without morals; and, therefore, I hastened to submit to the inspection of my fellow-citizens the description of a people at once free and truly moral.

* *New Voyage to the United States of North America: 3 volumes, octavo; 1791.—Buisson, Bookseller.*

It is this patriotism which has proved the source of all the hatred and of all the calumnies which have been accumulated upon my character. Daily did I find occasion to unfold it, in the Journal, which I engaged upon from my commencement of the revolution. There, sacrificing incessantly to the public interest all those of a private nature, which it would have proved easy and even advantageous to have conciliated with the ideas of *moderate individuals*, have I invariably expounded, maintained and propagated the true principles of Liberty and Equality. There, have I waged war, with unshaken fortitude, against all the prejudices which form a rampart around the privileged tribes, and all the abuses of despotism. Inflexible in my severe principles, those principles which a study of fifteen years, and a long and habitual horror against despotism have engraven

engraven upon my heart, I successively attacked the despot, his vizirs, his valets, the proud nobility, the hypocritical clergy, and all the consuming rapacity of office: Neither have I more spared the vices, the abuses and the prejudices which, under other appellations, have raised themselves upon the ruins of the ancient Government *. The usurpations and the criminal attempts of the Municipalities, the aristocracy of the Departments, the accumulations of powers in the National Assembly, the disorder and the precipitation of their discussions, the despotism of their Committees, the Machiavelism and the corruption of their leaders, the manners of their jockies, the iniquities of the decrees which they have extorted

* *Tyrannidis affectatio est in eo qui omnia imperii signa reipsa retinens, negat tamen verbis se habere vel velle imperium.*

—TACITUS.

their intrigues, their coalitions, the concealed artifices and mismanagement in the cases of the civil list, all these have I attacked; and upon all these have I awakened the attention of the public. I have traced out, named and unmasked not only those intriguers who concealed, under the veil of democracy, their ambitious views and their contempt for the people, but those *moderate* individuals who, beneath the pretext of a regard for the Monarchy, poorly disguised their love of the civil list and of corruption, upon which they grounded their means of subsistence.

Should it, therefore, appear astonishing that, standing alone, without the aid of party, possessing but an inconsiderable number of friends, all equally rigid in their opinions, being myself devoted solely to the
cause

cause of truth and liberty, exhibiting myself *to all* and *against all*, in conformity to principles, I have been assailed at once by so many enemies? An austerity of principles is a crime the most unpardonable and the most dangerous in a corrupted nation which is on the point of regenerating, because, *there*, a multitude of men, without either abilities or virtues, who exist only by corruption, and who deceive the publick, for the purpose of making them the victims of their plunder, dread the vigilance of the watchman and the light by which he exposes and disturbs their pillage. Thus, not one of those hypocrites could forgive me for having unmasked their actions, and all would have united themselves for my destruction. The coalition to which the flight of the King gave birth supplied them with a favourable opportunity. During
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the first moments, one common crime, one common error dictated this coalition ; and it was, afterwards, prolonged by one common interest. The defeated aristocracy, there, in fact, found the means of reviving their pretensions ; the *moderate* parties the occasion of pillaging the civil list, and of enslaving the people ; the popular apostates, dishonoured on every side, there enjoyed the pleasure of wreaking their vengeance upon the friends of liberty who despised them, and of lengthening the power which they, with pain, beheld escaping from their grasp.

Laying aside, for the moment, their long-harboured animosity, aiming but at (one object) the prolongation of their influence, unable to prove successful, except by deceiving their different factions, by
overthrowing

overthrowing the people, and by intimidating the defenders of liberty, these coalescing conspirators brought forwards one of the most infernal projects for enslaving the people even by the means of the people themselves, for destroying, and *that*, apparently out of respect for it, the Constitution, by *their* hands.

The reader must pardon me for having enlarged on this event which principally reanimated that system of calumnies which was played off against me, under the ancient government. The flight, and the protestation of the King against the Constitution naturally introduced the idea of correcting whatsoever was defective in the executive power, of organising the administration in a manner suitable to the general basis of the Constitution; that is of ren-

dering it representative and elective. This was the earnest desire of the Patriots. I defended it, and it was imputed to me as a crime. This system deranged the private ambition of corrupted individuals, who were inclined to maintain themselves in their stations by intrigue and favour, and who dreaded the judgement of the people whom they had deceived.

At first, however, they were exceedingly cautious of clashing with the general sentiment of indignation against the fugitive King. On the contrary, they excited this indignation, for the purpose of justifying the usurpation and accumulation, within their hands, of all the powers of which they had found the secret to make a second seizure.

This

This demagogical despotism could not last long under the name of the Assembly. What measures did they pursue? They strove to continue it under the name of the King. But, it was necessary to wrest it from the judgement of an irritated nation. They employed intrigue, terror, the pens of mercenaries, and supplicatory addresses to raise the compassion of the people in favour of the King and of royalty, and to declare him inviolable and beyond the reach of punishment. They misrepresented, as promoters of sedition, those who upheld the principles of freedom; they branded their doctrine as rebellious; they manifested an ungovernable eagerness to prevent, by the point of the musquet, the publicity of their arguments. This doctrine had been embraced by a celebrated society, deservedly considered as one of the most impregnable

fortresses of the Constitution: a society which had served as a pedestal for ambitious partisans. The factious members, not conceiving this pedestal to be any longer serviceable in raising them up to power, endeavoured to break it into pieces. A violent schism which they excited under the most frivolous pretexts, appeared, in *their* opinion, a forerunner of their ruin. In the mother-society, they were desirous of extirpating all the societies of the kingdom. They offered to them a feigned correspondence with the Schismatics, for the purpose of either domineering over or annihilating this correspondence. Thus, they extinguished those beacons which from so many points of the kingdom threw light upon the Plots of Conspirators and guided the Conduct of Magistrates.

Schisms

Schisms are always favourable to the ambitious leaders in revolutions. It was a schism which rendered the barbarous *Maurice* master of *Holland*. Indifferent with respect to all religions, he encouraged the war between the *remonstrants* and the *counter-monstrants*, for the purpose of destroying, by the aid of fanaticism, the enemies of his secret designs. It was a similar intention which gave rise to the schism of the *Jacobins*. Thus were hopes entertained of dividing all the societies, of destroying them the one after the other, and of governing without importunate inspectors.

The People were still dreaded by these secret tyrants. It became necessary to extirpate their influence over the public opinion; it became necessary to draw them into a contest with the National Guards.

The

The efforts hitherto made had proved unsuccessful. The people had remained victorious, both at the time of the resolution obtained by mendicant solicitation in the affair of the *Theatins*, and at the premeditated departure of the eighteenth of April. An advantage was taken of a peaceable gathering-together of the citizens who signed a petition at the *Champ-de-Mars*; they were represented to the National Guard as a gang of robbers; the tragedy opened with the scene of two men found, in the morning, under the altar, and *seasonably* massacred; then began the comedy of pistols and the throwing of stones; a report prevailed that the General was wounded; all minds were enflamed; the red flag was unnecessarily hoisted; the blood flowed; yet, no law had spoken to this effect; and they triumphed over a victory acquired after an
 opposition

opposition to women and children. Under the pretext of chimerical troubles, they still suffered the colours to wave, that they might become enabled, in virtue of this military dictatorship, to arrest and to cast into dungeons all those who might dare either to speak or to write against this oriental despotism.

Thus it was that under the affectation of tumults which he had secretly prepared, *Maurice* found the means of assembling within the cities his troops of the line, and of commanding in all quarters.

This was not sufficient. Our Decemvirs still trembled at the existence of patriotic writers. It was necessary to destroy them; and they employed the quackery of rallying phrases. These tyrants well knew that the
people,

people, incapable, from a want of time and convenient leisure, to probe facts to the bottom, suffered themselves to be governed by words; that a word cunningly thrown out will raise up before them a terrifying phantom, and impel them to murder their best friends, against whom they may, by artifices, have been enticed to harbour a suspicion. Thus was it that by a word *Cromwel* occasioned the assassination of the Independents, and *Maurice* the massacre of the *Arminians*. Adhering to *their* example *our* demagogues, through the assistance of their writers, brought dishonour down upon the name of the Republicans. They were criminated as either seditious or rebellious, or hostile to the Constitution; and all these epithets were, in the end, applied to the true friends of Liberty. Although no circumstances corresponded more with the

dominion

dominions of the thirty *Athenian* tyrants than this actual sway, and although each *Pisistratus* who ruled over *us* had not preserved even the shadow of royalty, they, nevertheless, founded the alarm-bell against all the *Republicans*. It was the watch-word for the national guard, for the libellists, and for the people. Every foe to the intriguers was a *Republican*. It was the *Republicans* who had excited the *imaginary* revolt in the *Champ de Mars*; and, therefore, it became necessary to proceed against them. Of course, and when this farce had sufficiently enflamed the general mind, a Committee which had been armed with an inquisitorial power solely for the purpose of detecting the counter-revolutionists, turned, in consequence of their own orders, their artillery against the patriots. The sacred asylum of houses was violated; the secrets of letters were treacherously revealed; the servants of

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families

families were converted into spies; *lettres de cachet* became multiplied as the result of vague and ridiculous accusations; the dungeons overflowed with innocent victims. Consternation seized upon all minds; even friends dreaded and avoided each other. As from men afflicted with the plague, so did they run from distinguished characters who had exalted their reputation by their writings. They were considered as doomed to the scaffold. To rob them of any interest with the public, pretexts were advanced for confounding them with the most despicable libellists. In order to feel the public pulse upon such a circumstance, reports were spread of their having been arrested, or they were forced to betake themselves to flight.

I was one of those individuals whom they had devoted publicly to the scaffold. *I*
whom,

whom, not eight days before, they had extolled to the skies, *now*, found myself suddenly plunged into a terrible abyss ; I read, in every countenance, not only the calumnies which had been circulated against me, but the alarm which my approach occasioned, and my impending sentence. A thousand informations reached me in the same moment ; my friends trembled for my fate ; some advised me to seek my safety in flight, and others to moderate my animadversions against my persecutors. I remained firm ; I appeared in every place ; I pursued even these my persecutors with the same high spirit and with the same inflexibility. My conscience spoke to me with a louder voice than all these terrors from without.

Freedom is at an end when intrepidity departs ; when villains attain to the point of intimidating honest men ; and when the

latter do not unite together, and make head against those infamous means which are employed by a political banditti.

Yes ! it must be confessed that I have been too fully taught, by this severe experience, to distinguish from each other the false boasters on the side of Liberty who are always ready to bend the knee before the idol of the day, and the insincere friends who stifle us with caresses, in the hour of prosperity, but, in the moment of danger desert; yet, also, have I felt the prodigious superiority of the man of worth over scoundrels and their valets; I have seen several of these miscreants disconcerted by my looks.

Unable to affright me, they changed their battery, and recurred to their favourite arms; to dark and lurking calumny.

The

The civil list, the public treasure, and the national employments were under their command : libellists and mercenary accusers were grovelling at their feet. Money was profusely distributed ; and the capital became inundated by emissaries who declaimed, in every public street, against the *Jacobins*, and by trumpets which, with violent blasts, proclaimed the *discovery of great conspiracies* (conspiracies even yet to be detected) and by pamphlets which marked out for the people and for the national guards their respective victims, and by journals which scattered far off the poison that had been prepared in the Metropolis.

Then it was that a thousand batteries played off at once against the patriotic writers : thus, the *pretended friend of the patriotists*, whose insolently-luxurious stile of living is

an evidence of his corruption, whose writings harbour the most perfidious Machiavellism, and disclose a heart abject beyond all comparison; thus, this gangrened author, grown arrogant from having perceived some bayonets wildly and erroneously raised in the *supposed* service of the Constitution, dared to accuse irreproachable writers of being hirelings like *him*, and cried out that they disobeyed the law, because they exclaimed against *his* faction. And, thus, the *Postilion through Calais*, in his tender mercies, would have given up to the executioner all those who had been proscribed: thus, also, the multitude of other journalists, each springing up at once, and as yet unknown to the public, strove which should outvie each other in the price that they chose to set upon their calumnies. But, this system of defamation soon disgusted honest citizens; the
tainted

tainted source of it was discovered; and no reader would draw out from their native mire these contemptible compilations which served only to deceive fools and to amuse knaves. For the purpose of insuring a perusal of their productions, they had recourse to another system of tactics; the libels were posted up as hand-bills; and these hand-bills became periodical and appeared daily. They wanted to deceive the people, and to excite them against their most unfulfilled defenders; this people who, at once, carry their mistrust and their credulity to an excess; because they enjoy so few means of either elucidating or verifying facts; this people who will not cease to weep over the ashes of Socrates, compelled, in consequence of the fickleness of popular judgments, to drink the juice of hemlock. Thus, they turned against the Apostles of the Liberty
of

of the Press this right of fixing up criminalizing hand-bills which they had so loudly inveighed against, and which corrupted individuals would have confined exclusively to the Administrative bodies. Instead of rendering these papers subservient to the instruction of the indigent people; instead of stamping them with the catechism of the Constitution, they exhibited and reproduced, in a thousand places, the most atrocious charges against irreproachable individuals; and the police so vigilant and in such an agitation with respect to the appearance of posted hand-bills, filled with rational arguments concerning the declaration of rights, and printed by the fraternal societies; this very Police passively beheld the repetition of these calumniating advertisements; they saw them crowded upon the pillars and the walls, and the military aristocracy,

complaisantly

complaisantly selecting them for the ornaments of their guard-room, infected with their poison the simple and credulous understanding of their artisan soldiers.

But, let us do justice to the People. They did not long continue the dupes of these stratagems. At length, they read only with contempt those rhapsodies, in which either foreign enemies or domestic adversaries, in the pay of foreigners, were perpetually mentioned: they saw that the drift of these authors was to instigate *them* to the commission of some enormous crime, and to afford a pretext for casting *them* into slavery, and for destroying the most zealous of their defenders.

II. *Charges brought against me.*

It is in these bills, the writers of which prudently shun an open detection, that the most atrocious accusations have been assembled against me. They charge me with an *Odious Life*. That odious life I have laid before you. It must, I trust, be odious to all the partizans of despotism, to all depraved men, and to all mercenary and pensioned libellists.

They alledge against me that I am the *Chief in the Departments of Traitors to their Country, &c.* Then, let them name these traitors with whom I correspond. Are they *Prussians, Dutch or English?* What! have the Committee of Enquiries made no discoveries with respect to this correspondence? What! has not the indefatigable activity of my enemies collected any proofs in support of

of

of this allegation? or, rather, how could it have supplied them with any proofs whatever? I am not either the commander or foldier of any party. I have no office, I carry on no correspondence. Sometimes, I scarcely have the leifure of a moment to snatch up a pen and write a letter to any of my dearest connexions. The multiplicity of my engagements has made me break afunder even friendly communications. Setting aside the pleasure which I derive from interviews with fix or seven friends, of whom the greater part are Deputies, I pass my life either within my folitary closet, or in the midft of my family. I do not even frequent the Societies of which I am a Member, and it gives me concern that I remain an *absentee*. Is *this*, then, the conduct of an intriguer, at the head of a party? How long is it fince the art to acquire adherents

has become that of rendering oneself invisible?

I am taxed with *having been in the pay of Foreign Powers.*

This is another common-place calumny, repeated and used by all the parties, and easy to be advanced, because it is difficult to repel it otherwise than by a flat contradiction.

Ambitious men, bent upon the destruction of their enemies, have always successfully availed themselves of these contrivances. Thus, the venerable *Barneveldt*, *Grotius*, and *Hogerbeets* were accused of having been sold to the *French*, whom the people hated.....

What

What answer can be returned to such an accusation? Examine the daily course of my life; follow me to the inside of my dwelling. You will there find that honest mediocrity which was the boast of *Horace*; and I may remark with him:

“ *Non ebur neque aurum*

“ *Meâ renidet in domo lacunar.*”

In every thing which belongs to me the greatest simplicity prevails. I purchase neither land nor houses; I have neither equipage, nor domestics; my *Lacedæmonian* fare can allure no guest; I have neither c. sh. books, nor port-folios. Now, if I possessed the gold in which I have been represented to abound, for some time past, I must employ it either in the luxuries of life, or in estates, or in capital stock, vested in *some* funds. Will it be contended that I labour under the disease of the avaricious? Let

my

my friends answer who, so frequently, and with justice, reproach me for my negligent contempt of money.

It is particularly as the result of my having pleaded the cause of the blacks that they have ascribed to me the possession of such heaps of gold. Twenty times have I demonstrated the absurdity of this aspersions; and, *now*, I will proceed further: I will declare, and I can prove that the part which I took in this cause has been extremely detrimental to my interests; and that neither I nor the generous friend who wished to contribute with *me*, to the triumph of such principles have been, hitherto, reimbursed what we advanced.

They alledge against me a correspondence with *Clarkson*, that ardent enemy of the
Slave-

Slave-trade. Most certainly, I wish that my affairs would have permitted me to carry on an epistolary intercourse with that respectable Apostle of humanity, and with other *Englishmen* of his disposition. But, I believe that, since I received any letter from him, fifteen months have elapsed. Gracious Heaven! what, then is Society, unless it be permitted, without incurring suspicion, to correspond with strangers at once the most venerable for their virtues and abilities? Will it be, likewise, affirmed that the *Jacobins* are sold to the *English*, because they have done homage to the manes of the celebrated *Price*, and because they, *sometimes*, write to the Revolution-society?

To these vague accusations they add others still more incoherent with respect to my private life. They charge me with
 having

having attempted to borrow money upon false mortgages ; of having duped some individuals ; and of having embezzled the fortune of my associates. They mention a villain who boasts that he has documents in support of this allegation.

Well ! let him shew these documents. Wherefore does that hatred which he has so long declared against me remain satisfied with keeping them concealed ? Let him bring forward all the positive and certain facts. But, upon this ground, I set him at defiance, as I do every other individual alive.

To all *honest* citizens who may rise up to accuse me, I am ready to answer. I have had but one single society of interest during the whole course of my life, and that was
for

for the enterprize of the Lyceum of *London*, which I formed. It became unfortunate through causes independent of myself; and, being persecuted by the tyranny of the Ministers, its extinction was accomplished by my imprisonment in the *Besfille*. * I am ready to prove, with the *accounts and receipts* in my hand, that, far from having made dupes, I have been myself the victim; and that actually far from having embezzled the property of any person whatsoever, I have lost a considerable sum, notwithstanding that I was to have been indemnified against every circumstance of this nature.

I will not trespass upon the patience of my readers with a detail of this business. More than seven years have expired since I myself threw the courts open to my asso-

ciate ; and, from that moment, he has continued silent. Would he, *now*, preserve this silence, if he imagined that his charges were unanswerably founded ? Even this associate has had it declared to me, by his Attorney, and has declared in his interrogatory, that *he took no part in the libels published against me, and that he was ready to disavow them.*

Do they intend to renew these libels ? The silence of my associate makes it a law with me to wait until he breaks it ; [but, I declare that I am as far from refusing to discuss the facts, and the documents if they exist, *provided that these facts be positive, and the documents deposed and certified in the presence of a notary public.* Under these two conditions, will I enter the lists against chimeras, and the impostor or the forger
may

may escape the punishment which he deserves. I have learned the value of these precautions. When I was in the *Bastille*, they shewed me a false certificate received from *London*, in which the perjurer affirmed that I was the author of a libel against the Queen. This piece contained within it the proofs of its falsity. It struck my eyes directly, and I shewed it to M. *Le Noir*. . . . Gracious Heaven! (I exclaimed) to what danger is not innocence exposed in your hands! Had it not been for an anachronism, I should, perhaps, have lost my life. My readers will shudder at the recital. The instigator of this certificate is actually the villain whose mouth vomits forth all the calumnies by which attempts are made to brand the conduct of my life. If any documents exist

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in *their* possession against me, they are,
doubtless, of a fabrication similar to that
of the execrable certificate.

F I N I S.



